

The Woman's Page of The Times-Dispatch.

Early Writings

Once, a long time ago, didn't you think how grand it would be to write a book? I am almost sure that you did. Few of us have lived through the period of the first composition that was any good at all at school and the nice blue mark at the bottom of the page without teeming with literary ambition. The day that your rambling remarks concerning the birth and death of a man of letters was put up on the board as a model, then and there was ambition born in your soul. What does it matter if the whole thing was copied out of the largest encyclopedia in the library? Didn't you leave out a whole chunk of the middle part about the things the man wrote? All the rest of the children did the same thing.

You knew from that day forward that genius stayed at your shoulder. And a nice laurel wreath was surely hanging in the closet of some mighty editor's sanctum, merely waiting for you to walk up and say: "This is mine, I believe." Happy dreams, happy days. Once you wrote a story for the school magazine, published with Herculean effort by the entire student body. It must have been called "How One Old Man Was Conquered" or some such trash. The girls thought it was perfectly wonderful. They said "She writes" in whispers, and your soul hardly lived through the delight of seeing all the "thees" and "ands" printed.

Yes, at some period of almost any one's life, I believe, the Muse has a visit. Dig far down into the depths of the funny old brown desk that you had in your room at school. Manuscripts, neatly rolled, utterly out of accordance with the proper mode of handling stuff—the desk is full of them. You yourself thought they were the best things done in college, occasionally your best friend undertook to differ with you, but you smiled at her ignorance and wrote two more detective stories.

What monstrous subjects were attempted? Everything was suited to your talent and pen and you wrote reams on the characters of Hamlet and Romeo, to say nothing of dissertations of love and suitors, when you had only seen one love letter, and that was the one that the girl who roomed next door had from a friend on the floor above. On the wagon is hitched to a star very surely.

Have you read them over, those things that you wrote a long time ago? Sacred to your innermost soul are they, and as much unknown to character as the cuneiform writings in the libraries of Babylon. What was your style? You didn't have any. You just rambled along and shed hot tears in the pantry mopping your face with a tea towel because "Comp" teacher didn't fall down and worship, and say, "Behold, a genius is in our midst." You simply could not understand her lack of perception and the red ink around everything you wrote.

The stories are still in the desk, and few, very few, of us would have the courage to wade through half of the lot. If one were poetic one might say they were stepping stones or dead selves, but one is not poetic. But it is a phase of life, and once a long time ago you thought you would write a book and your younger sister dusted the manuscripts and forgot to burn up your letters, and the girls are grown up that thought the first story was any good. What is in your desk that you had when you went to school?

BRIANT WITT.

When Needles Break.

If annoyed by breaking silk when sewing, particularly in overcasting where there is a hard pull on the thread, try drawing the fingers along the silk from the point where broken off to the end. Sometimes waxing gives further strength.

Never forget to thread a needle from the opposite end of the thread from where it is broken off.

A needle can be more quickly threaded if the eye is held over a white surface, and the needle itself is steadied by pressing the thumb back to back while the thread is being pushed through.

Half the disparagement of needles is due to using those unsuited in number to the silk or cotton. Try to draw a coarse thread through a fine eye, and the thread splits and knots, besides not being smooth in the eye, and the needle which comes in all sizes and lengths, for embroidery. If nervous, never use too coarse a needle, as it pushes badly and constantly comes unthreaded.

Needles are of three kinds—sharps, betweens and sewing needles. Sharps are most generally used, but the women who grow accustomed to betweens will never use anything else. They are less likely to break, and being shorter, they permit quicker sewing. The better the sewer, the finer the needle used. Better break a few than worry with pushing a coarse needle through material. Especially for silks or delicate mull is a fine needle imperative to prevent unsightly holes.

Do not put it aside to be thrown out later; before that time comes it may be imbedded in some one's flesh, and be watchful when sewing near a bed that no needles escape you. A woman awake one night with a sharp pain in her leg. It took a specialist and an X-ray to find the trouble—a needle broken off close to the knee. It had been left there by the woman's daughter, who threw her work on the bed and neglected to notice that the thread was minus a needle when she removed it.

Do not buy cheap thread or sewing silk. Breaking is maddening and colors fade. For fine hemming or stitching use O or OO silk. Many sewers do not know that there is a finer letter than A. For gathering, a coarse buttonhole twist, is more easily handled than doubled sewing silk. Never double a thread through a needle, as it is sure to pull; rather take two threads of equal length, putting both through the eye at once.

Keep needles dry and shiny and the thread clean. Have an emery in every workbag, or in its absence one's hair can be utilized. Thread or silk kept on spool cases grows dusty, and the outer layer, if soiled, should be discarded.



CHARMING FROCKS EMBODYING MANY OF THE PROMINENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LATEST MODES.

L'Art de la Mode.

Afternoon Tea Dainties—What Is Best to Serve at a Function That is Becoming a Popular Feature in Social Life.

The 5 o'clock tea, or rather the afternoon tea, for often it is served before 5, has been a feature of home and social life in England for centuries, and in London, in Liverpool and other large cities it is one of the customs of business men to have tea served in their offices just before the end of the business day.

In America afternoon teas are comparatively a new feature, but like many other customs borrowed from other countries, when once taken up by the social set here, has become a fad, and is now one of the most popular of the social functions of the times, and one likely to last for all time.

When American women do things they do them so much better than European women that they can now teach Englishwomen how to prepare and serve those dainty little repasts called afternoon teas and give them a point of Assam, and two ounces of Monks. This is very fine. The addition of one ounce of Japan tea is often considered an improvement.

Here are directions for making some dainty cakes for a home tea which are inexpensive, and will be found delicious:

Beat two eggs to a froth in a cake dish, add a cup of sugar, a cup of flour, a cup of milk, a cup of butter, a cup of vanilla extract, a cup of baking powder, a cup of salt, and a cup of cream, then add half a cup of butter which is quite soft.

Beat this well together with the other ingredients, then add a cup of sweet milk, stir it well through the mixture, and last add two and a half cups of flour sifted twice with three teaspoonsful of baking powder, and stir the whole to a smooth batter. Slightly butter the inside of your patty pans and put one generous tablespoonful of the cake batter in each pan, and bake in a slow oven, this mixture will make over thirty little cakes. Cover the top of each with a frosting and put one blanched almond on the center.

Cut some cold Virginia ham in small pieces, put them through one of those patent grinders. To each half pint of the ground ham put a level tablespoonful of English chow-chow, first grinding it through the grinder. Mix the mixture, and last add two and a half cups of flour sifted twice with three teaspoonsful of baking powder, and stir the whole to a smooth batter. Slightly butter the inside of your patty pans and put one generous tablespoonful of the cake batter in each pan, and bake in a slow oven, this mixture will make over thirty little cakes. Cover the top of each with a frosting and put one blanched almond on the center.

Butt paste and patté de foie gras sandwiches. Fruit salads. Toasted wafers. Plum jam, strawberry jam. Fruit tartlets. Chocolate puddings. Chocolate eclairs. Macaroons. Little tea cakes, French pastries.

Tea, chocolate, coffee (iced or hot). Here are directions for a blend of tea now much used for afternoon teas in the leading hotels in New York: To a half-pound of the best Pomeroy Oolong add one-quarter of a pound of Young Hyson and two ounces of gunpowder tea. Mix these lightly with two wooden spoons till well blended, then put in a glass or china tea caddy which closes tightly. A blend of tea used much in the little tea rooms in London is made of a half pound of Soosong, a quarter of a pound of Assam, and two ounces of Monks. This is very fine. The addition of one ounce of Japan tea is often considered an improvement.

Here are directions for making some dainty cakes for a home tea which are inexpensive, and will be found delicious:

Beat two eggs to a froth in a cake dish, add a cup of sugar, a cup of flour, a cup of milk, a cup of butter, a cup of vanilla extract, a cup of baking powder, a cup of salt, and a cup of cream, then add half a cup of butter which is quite soft.

Beat this well together with the other ingredients, then add a cup of sweet milk, stir it well through the mixture, and last add two and a half cups of flour sifted twice with three teaspoonsful of baking powder, and stir the whole to a smooth batter. Slightly butter the inside of your patty pans and put one generous tablespoonful of the cake batter in each pan, and bake in a slow oven, this mixture will make over thirty little cakes. Cover the top of each with a frosting and put one blanched almond on the center.

Cut some cold Virginia ham in small pieces, put them through one of those patent grinders. To each half pint of the ground ham put a level tablespoonful of English chow-chow, first grinding it through the grinder. Mix the mixture, and last add two and a half cups of flour sifted twice with three teaspoonsful of baking powder, and stir the whole to a smooth batter. Slightly butter the inside of your patty pans and put one generous tablespoonful of the cake batter in each pan, and bake in a slow oven, this mixture will make over thirty little cakes. Cover the top of each with a frosting and put one blanched almond on the center.

Concerning Modes

The scallop of childhood days is again to the front in every imaginable form, promising before many weeks to have as wide a popularity as the over-worked fringe of six months ago. This familiar way of finishing the edge of a child's petticoat now appears on the smartest of dinner gowns, on the edge of evening cloaks, on collars of every description, and even in one daring model on the bottom of a white serge skirt, as well as on the accompanying jacket.

A particular case in point shows it in the finish of the superb broadcote evening gown recently worn by the countess von Bernstorff, which has the square neck finished with the shallow curved edge, while the short sleeves are formed of three separate pieces of the scalloped broadcote, the edge of the lower tier being further finished with tiny ruffles of lace or tulle. This gown, one of several of the same character made for the countess of the Kaiser's embassy in the past season, is a well-defined stripe with this same scallop.

There is a good deal more to the scallop of the one-piece frock of the moment than there was a year ago, though it is still at times a very simple affair. In some models it is merely a straight band of the material of the gown, about an inch and a quarter in width, and may be attached by a row of machine stitching at the upper edge, if it is intended to give it a little solidity it can be put on with invisible stitches. This straight band may be broken by a part of the skirt going up over it or by a part of the gown, about an inch and a quarter in width, and may be attached by a row of machine stitching at the upper edge, if it is intended to give it a little solidity it can be put on with invisible stitches. This straight band may be broken by a part of the skirt going up over it or by a part of the gown, about an inch and a quarter in width, and may be attached by a row of machine stitching at the upper edge, if it is intended to give it a little solidity it can be put on with invisible stitches.

Get out your seed pearls that have been tucked away for years, for this once popular jewelry is in favor again and is appearing in delightful forms. While the new designs are copies of the old French pieces, they never have the association of an antique, so dealers in the seed pearl jewelry declare.

CHICHESTER'S PILLS
Largest and Best
Sold by Druggists Everywhere

Do You Know How to Pack?

It is irritating to have a wrinkled frock come home from the tailor. Even those whose prices are big enough to insure better things do not seem to realize that no suit should be folded until it is dry.

A professional packer gives this hint: That every folded skirt should have the platts carefully caught in a place at the hem before packing. This done and the skirt carefully folded with tissue paper in the fold it should come out of the trunk as smooth as when it went in.

The same packer says that soft gowns that are difficult to pack smoothly often carry better when rolled over a heavy roll of newspaper that has been covered with sheets of tissue paper. If the gown is white this paper should be blue.

For crushed tissue paper in every fold, stuff sleeves, bows and loops with it; fold it around flowers and under feathers, and also all odd corners. It prevents slipping and does not add to weight—an important item when over-weight baggage is to be checked.

Where there is plenty of space in a trunk one packer puts her coats on the hangers and stuffs out the sleeves and front. This takes up too much room for the average person. The best method of coat packing is to fold it inside out, sleeve to sleeve and front to front, then fold once lengthwise with tissue paper between. The sleeves may be slightly stuffed before folding.

Snug Packing Best.
The secret of successful packing is tight packing. The inexperienced fears to crush things, so gives them room to slide and slip. A moderate sized trunk, firmly filled, is a wiser choice every way than a big trunk. Not only do clothes carry better, but when visiting you are a far more welcome guest. It is inconsiderate to take a mammoth trunk into a friend's home.

When one is to live in a trunk for weeks, as often happens in summer touring, pack so that the things you most need are near the top. Heavy clothes for cold weather emergencies, if placed smoothly in the bottom of a trunk with a tray cover or piece of heavy muslin tucked in around them and firmly pinned, will act like a false bottom to the trunk, and save time and annoyance in repacking.

Unless you have a maid who packs and unpacks for you, do not accept the attentions of friends in your packing. You will know where nothing is, and

you will waste time hunting for articles quickly needed.

If you cannot afford modern compartment trunks, get paper boxes that fit snugly into your tray. Label the lids and fill with your small belongings. This saves time and temper and keeps ribbons, laces, collars and neckwear neat and convenient. An elastic on each box prevents the lids from falling off when the trunk is turned upside down.

Put in Extra Tapes.

Do not neglect to have extra tapes sewed to your trunk trays, especially in your hatbox. They keep the contents from slipping and take up little room. Pin your hats firmly, even though you think they are well protected. Well pinned and stuffed with tissue paper, the most fragile hat carries well.

The neat girl makes trunk sets. These consist of covers for each tray and compartment. Shoe covers, a corset bag and a soiled clothes bag are included. These may be of colored linen, bound with white tape and embroidered with a monogram on each piece. They keep out much dust, and if big enough to tuck in the edges, they help to prevent sliding.

Avocado Salad.

This is a fruit salad, made of avocado or alligator pear, mixed with whatever other fruit you wish—grapes, grapes, apricots, grapefruit or peaches. Peel and cut the avocado into dice, then toss lightly with whatever other fruit you have, using two silver forks for the purpose. All the ingredients should be thoroughly chilled, and at serving time arranged on a bed of white, crisp lettuce leaves, then over all pour a fruit mayonnaise, made as follows: Beat up two yolks of eggs with two tablespoonfuls of sifted sugar, add slowly two tablespoonfuls of lemon juice, stirring all the time; then gradually add two tablespoonfuls of sherry wine. Beat thoroughly with an egg beater. Serve very cold.

Family Wash a Specialty.
EAGLE STEAM LAUNDRY,
Mad. 4642 723-5 West Cary

Revival of Tortoise Shell

Tortoise shell has never gone entirely out of favor, but just now it is distinctly smart and has forced even the popular ivory into the background.

Toilet sets of fine shell are lovely. If perishable, and the modern girl collects her set piece by piece, as her older sister did ivory and her mother did silver.

Some of the sets are entirely plain. This cost depends on the cleanness and quality of the shell. Others are carved more or less elaborately. Still others are inlaid with silver ornamentation. The best looking is the plain shell set, with a monogram in raised tortoise shell on each piece. As these must be made to order, they are decidedly costly.

Girls are bringing out from their hiding places the old-time high comb of shell. It goes well with the chignon and covered cars of the modern coiffure.

Worn in the Hair.

A bandeau of tortoise shell, inlaid with silver, is reminiscent of the ancient back comb worn by small girls in the latter part of the last century. Heavy hairpins of shell to hold the chignon or bun are popular in the daytime and with brilliants for evening costume. Barrettes of shell are studied to match, though the woman of quiet taste always prefers plain shell effects of exquisite polish or delicate carving.

A gift for a man would be military brushes of tortoise shell. There is also a complete manicure set in the same material that somehow seems more masculine than toilet fittings of silver or gold.

A new desk ornament is a cigarette case of silver, with double openings and a handle like a flat market basket. The lids are of tortoise shell, inlaid in silver rims.

A pretty trinket for the table is the round silver jewel case, on feet, with an inlaid tortoise shell lid. There are smaller trinket boxes to match. Each case is lined with velvet.

Studs for Waist.

Very new for the shirtwaist set is a case of six tortoise shell buttons, inlaid with silver. Sleeve buttons can be had to match, while the belt buckles of shell, plain or inlaid, are popular and unobtrusive.

The girl who cannot afford a gold or enamel locket will find a gold or more useful than silver, which rubs off on the face, leaving unsightly black marks. The plain locket, with the raised shell monogram, is exceedingly smart.

The opera glass of tortoise shell is becoming a formidable rival of mother-of-pearl and aluminum. The last has chiefly its lightness to recommend it.

The Rest Gown.

One seldom pays much attention to the rest gown, which should play an important part in the wardrobe. It does not necessarily need to be of a negligee type, just made over soft, loose lines. Since the high waist dresses in a favor, this is a comparatively easy matter.

Select some soft, pliable material of silk or wool. The bodies made in surplus styles would be effective. A fichu of soft lace or white mousseline softens the lines. A plaiting of lace around the sleeves finishes them in a dainty manner.

A bow of lace with long ends catches the sash at the center. Rest gowns may be made of any inexpensive material, and look very well in cotton, crepe, voiles or challis are pretty in the right colors.

Two Exquisite Gowns.

In "Primo," a new comedy produced at the Comedie Francaise, Mlle. Faber wears two especially stunning gowns. The first was an afternoon gown of mastic-colored cloth. This was extremely fine in texture, and was made with a tunic of violet-colored mousseline. Bands of the mousseline trimmed the tunic about the neck and hem. The skirt under the tunic was formed of two flounces, elaborately embroidered and scalloped around the lower edge.

An evening gown of Oriental-yellow velvet was the second dress. This was made with long, simple lines. The square-cut train was lined with a rich gold brocade. A large rever on one side covered the bodice from absolute plainness. The skirt was draped and slashed almost to the knees. Bands of gold embroidery followed diagonally across the front the outline of the top drapery.

On Opening Letters.

In the course of a spirited article on "Our Relations Rightly" in the April Woman's Home Companion, the author says that the "element" commandment should be "Mind your own business." On the subject of husbands and wives opening each other's letters, she says:

"There are wives who open their husband's letters, and husbands who think nothing of reading those addressed to their wives. This may have its romantic reason; but how about the outside? It being one of the outside of the sacred confidences when the husband of my intimate and opens the letter which I write to her."

"Said a young matron to me: 'Your letter to my husband I read this morning at the breakfast table, before he came downstairs. I have no doubt he would tell you where to secure the book about which you asked him, and I am sure he will reply to your letter as soon as he can make time to do so.'

"My letter to her husband was simple and unadorned. It was the publisher of a certain volume of which he had told me. The contents of that innocent little note might have been read from the house-top, but for some reason, I felt indignant that the envelope that I had directed to him had been opened by another person, even though that person were his wife."

"My daughter is away on a visit just now," wrote a mother to her daughter's friend, "and in reading your letter, which has just arrived for her, I see that you ask her to meet you in town next Wednesday. Instead of forwarding your letter, I am writing to explain that she will not be back home by that time."

"The mother meant to be kind, but why should she have the right to open an envelope that did not bear her name and read therein words that had not been penned in her hand?"

"Of course, there are times when it is absolutely necessary that the members of one's family open one's letters, but these occasions are not frequent, and unless one is too ill to read them, the epistles of one's intimate friends should be treated with some degree of privacy."